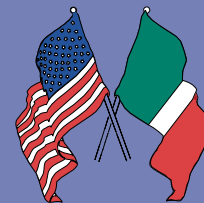




NEW JERSEY ITALIAN AMERICAN HERITAGE COMMISSION



Governor McGreevey Addresses Convocation of Italian American Groups

Governor James McGreevey addressed a statewide convocation of over 30 Italian American organizations, held on Saturday, March 8, 2003, in the Conference Room of the Department of State, 225 West State Street in Trenton. The event was sponsored by the New Jersey Italian and Italian American Heritage Commission and hosted by Frank Gargione and Eileen Poiani, co-

chairs of the Commission's Advisory Council.

The Governor expressed support for the mission of the commission: to build and strengthen the cultural identity of Italians and Italian Americans through public educational programs that preserve and promote an accurate, bias-free and non-stereotyped understanding and awareness of historical and current contributions and accomplishments of people of Italian heritage. Declaring that the objective was "to instill in the next generation a sense of pride in their ancestry and the proud legacy of what is Italy", McGreevey underscored the importance of the commission's goal to develop educational curricula and disburse them throughout the statewide school system.

Italian American organizations throughout the state were invited to the convocation in an effort to unify and coordinate efforts to promote Italian and Italian American heritage and to create a statewide clearinghouse for information. The convocation served as a way of introducing the Commission and Institute to participants and began the process of identifying ways in which the Commission and the organizations can help each other to achieve common goals. An ancillary goal is to create statewide solidarity for the approximately 20% of New Jersey's population who are identified as Italian American.



Governor James McGreevey addressing convocation.

In addition to the Governor, speakers included Terry McIntyre, NJ Director of Ethnic and Minority Affairs; Robert A. Freda, Executive Director of the Commission; Larry Paragano, Chair of the Commission; Dr. Catherine Puglisi, professor of Rutgers University; Giuseppina Vincitorio, representing the Italian Consulate's Education Office; Marisa Trubiano, Commissioner and Professor at Montclair State University; Gilda Rorro Baldassari, Ed.D. and Secretary/Treasurer of the Commission; Vice Chair Angelo Morresi; and Commissioners Richard Bilotti and William Connell, Ph.D. The day ended with a box lunch and the beautiful music of the Bloomfield Mandolin Orchestra, which played both Italian and American favorites. The Commission's office manager, Vita Semeraro, ably coordinated the day's activities.

The Commission consists of twenty-one members and is in, but not of, the New Jersey Department of Education. The operations office of the Commission is The Institute for Italian and Italian American Heritage Studies, which is based in Rutgers University.



**From left to right:
Lawrence E. Tamanini, Manny Alfano,
Joseph Coccia, Gilda Rorro Baldassari.**



Richard Bilotti, left, with Frank Gargione.



**Governor McGreevey with the
Bloomfield Mandolin Orchestra.**

*"To instill in the next generation a sense of pride in
their ancestry and the proud legacy of what is Italy."*



Chairman's Message

It has been just about a year since the first meeting of the New Jersey Italian and Italian American Heritage Commission met and what a year it's been. In addition to solidifying basic organizational groundwork such as a mission statement and bylaws, the Commission has accomplished an array of achievements, among them:

- Sponsored Columbus Day festivities at Drumthwacket, the Governor's mansion, which included a troop of Renaissance-attired jesters from Piansano, Italy.
- Held the first convocation of Italian American organizations in Trenton, attended by the Governor as well as representatives from over 30 groups.
- With Rutgers University, sponsored Italian Hours, a ten-day series of activities, lectures, films and discussions.
- Co-sponsored an Italian music concert with Mercer County Ciao, at Princeton University.

Italy has produced some of the greatest explorers, leaders, sculptors, artists, and



IAHC President N. Larry Paragano addresses March 8 convocation.

musicians that the world has ever known. It has contributed to the civilization of the world roads, architecture, laws, music and literature. We have so much to be proud of. It's up to us to educate the general public as well as our own Italian American compatriots about the tremendous cultural legacy that our ancestors brought with them when they came to this country.

Join with us as we embark on this wonderful voyage. Support the Commission and participate in our activities. Make a financial contribution so that we have the resources to achieve all the great goals that you will read about in these pages.

Saluti

N. Larry Paragano
N. Larry Paragano

www.njitalia.nj.gov

The Commission's website was created to serve as a convenient source of information on its structure and activities. In addition to the original Act which created the Commission as well as the Bylaws, visitors to the site can find the names of the Commissioners and a listing of the committees and their chairs. Also included on the site are the 2003 meeting schedule and the minutes of the last meeting.



MISSION

To build and strengthen the cultural identity of Italians and Italian Americans through public educational programs that preserve and promote an accurate, bias free and non stereotyped understanding and awareness of historical and current contributions and accomplishments of people of Italian heritage.

DICHIARAZIONE DI MISSIONE

Per costruire e rinforzare l'identità culturale italiana e italoamericana attraverso programmi di istruzione pubblica che conservano e promuovono una comprensione e una consapevolezza, esatte e libere di pregiudizi, dei contributi e dei successi, sia storici che attuali, della gente di cultura italiana.

News from Board of Academic Advisers

This past fall, to provide input and support for the programs of the IIIAHS, a Board of Academic Advisers was created, consisting of six Commissioners, four members of the Rutgers faculty, and five other prominent scholars active in the fields of Italian and Italian American Studies. A first meeting was held on the Rutgers campus on December 6. Philosophies and approaches to the promotion of Italian and Italian American Studies were discussed. Dr. Catherine Puglisi of Rutgers, who is chairing the drive at Rutgers to create an interdisciplinary Italian Studies program, discussed a number of important initiatives currently underway on the Rutgers campus.

The Board also considered several proposals for funding by the Italian American Heritage Foundation, making several recommendations.

Under the auspices of the Institute, and with the positive recommendation of the Board of Academic Advisers, a contribution has been made to support the publica-



Dr. William J. Connell at March convocation.

tion of a book of writings by Italian Americans about New Jersey, edited by Dr. Edvige Giunta, Jennifer Gillan, and Maria Mazziotti Gillan, to be published by Rutgers University Press. With the collaboration of the Board and the Institute, Rutgers has developed an impressive Italian cultural program, "Italian Hours," consisting of lectures and exhibits to be held on the New Brunswick campus in early April.

Plans are underway for sponsoring future publications, programs and exhibits at academic institutions throughout the state.



Higher Education Committee Update

Community Education Project. We are collecting syllabi from area departments that offer Italian American Studies, Italian Cultural Studies, Italian History courses, and are getting information on pre-existing community Italian arts presentations as the first step toward identifying a thematic unit that can be the subject matter of the multimedia presentation that we will create. One of the goals of the **next meeting** will be to select that overarching theme (spanning Italian and Italian American history and culture) and to form a core group of committee members who will design the presentation.

Recruitment and Professional Advancement of Teachers. We have identified two conferences and one teachers' association as possible venues for a work-shop for Italian teachers that will be organized by the Higher Ed Committee: NECTFL and FLENJ, and ITANJ, respectively.



Marisa Trubiano addresses March 8 convocation.

Expansion of Italian Language and Culture and Italian American Studies Instruction at Institutions of Higher Education. On March 27th, Bob Freda and Marisa Trubiano met with Dr. Della Vecchia, Dr. Iannuzzi, and others from Camden Community College about the possibility of a course offerings in Italian American Studies and future collaborations with the Commission. As we at the Commission begin to identify funding sources and a proposal, it may be possible for us to work with institutions, through a match funding program, to initiate and expand course offerings. In this initial phase, we welcome collaboration with and suggestions from organizations, like UNICO, OSIA and the NIAF, that are also taking steps to expand Italian language course offerings.

For more information contact Marisa Trubiano: trubianom@mail.montclair.edu or (973) 655-7950.

Sensitivity & Public Awareness Committee

Created to maintain a formal response to incidences of openly biased and stereotypical depictions of Italian Americans, the Sensitivity and Public Awareness Committee has established a statement that reflects the Commission's position of reinforcing positive images of all ethnic groups.

The Committee also includes among its goals the creation of a database of Italian American organizations in the state,

their websites (if applicable), and contact information. If you are a member of an Italian American organization and would like to receive future correspondence on the activities of the Commission, please fill out the form below and return it to NJ-IIIHS, Rutgers University, 43 College Avenue, Scott Hall, Room 223, New Brunswick, NJ 08901.

Questionnaire

Your Name _____ Your Home Phone # _____
 Your Address _____
 Organization Name _____
 Organization Address _____
 Organization Website Address _____
 Organization Phone # _____

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S CORNER



*Robert Freda
Executive Director*

These are exciting and challenging times for our Commission. There is no doubt that the New Jersey Institute for Italian and Italian American Heritage Studies (NJ-IIIHS)

as the operational arm of the Commission at Rutgers is on many radar screens in New Jersey and nationwide. We receive numerous inquiries daily and by way of direct response and referral to our web site – njitalia.nj.gov – we are explaining our mission goals and activities to a wide audience.

Less than a year old, working with a minimal budget and staff, yet having the volunteer efforts of Commissioners and friends, many people cannot believe all that has been accomplished. This newsletter gives testimony to the programs projects and initiatives that The Institute has undertaken in such a short period.

The Commission is deeply grateful to Rutgers the State University, The New Jersey Department of Education and to the many Italian American civic, cultural and educational organizations, both at the community and institutional level of our colleges and universities, for their support and belief in our work.

We anticipate increased interest and collaboration, not only from the hundreds of Italian American organizations and institutions here in New Jersey and from other states but also with Italy through the Italian Consuls General of New York and Philadelphia and their respective subsidiary Vice Consulate offices in Newark and Trenton respectively.

Our public budget for 2003-04 will not be adequate to carry out the Commission's public service agenda. For this reason we ask that all who believe in our work to contact the New Jersey Italian American Foundation, through our Institute office, whose purpose is to provide financial resources to Italian and Italian American Heritage Education.

Robert A. Freda Ed.D., *Executive Director*
Summer 2003

News from School Curriculum & Education Committee

The School Curriculum & Education Committee has three initiatives on curriculum development: Italia Oggi, an Italophile Youth Group; the promotion of the study of the Italian language in New Jersey public and private schools; and the development of curriculum that would incorporate into it information about Italians and Italian Americans.

Italia Oggi has made much progress in organizing itself under President Peter Tarquinio. More information about this group's activities and initiatives will be available in the next newsletter.

To promote the study of the Italian language, a memorandum of understanding will soon be signed between the Commissioner of Education Librera and the Italian Consulate General in New York. The Committee is also exploring the possibility of incentive money available from NIAF to promote Italian language studies.

The curriculum development committee has been meeting regularly in the offices of the Honorary Vice Consulate for



Gilda Rorro Baldassari (r.), Chair of School Curriculum & Education Committee, with Terry McIntyre, Director of Ethnic and Minority Affairs for the Dept. of State of NJ.

Italy in Trenton to create procedures for the curriculum guides. The first in-service session with the writers took place at the Department of Education on March 11. Fourteen writers representing the northern, central and southern regions of the state, formed three sub-committees for Elementary, Secondary and High School levels. They will be developing lesson plans and related activities and will submit drafts of their work in May.

The New Jersey Institute of Italian and Italian-American Heritage, located at Rutgers the State University in New Brunswick, is the operational body of New Jersey Italian and Italian-American Heritage Commission for program implementation and administration. The Commission, located in, but not of, The New Jersey Department of Education, was created pursuant to the enactment of P.L. 2001 Chapter 343 C. 18A4-42 and signed into law January 2002. The Institute, a 501(c) entity with statewide jurisdiction, is charged with providing services to the public at large as well as public, non-profit and other public service institutions in all twenty-one counties.

NJ-III AHS
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Terence P. McIntyre
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